





Pocahontas County

HUNTERSVILLE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH- Huntersville

Organized 1836 -

-Built 1854

-1-

Chapter 6 - Sections 1 & 2.

Huntersville Presbyterian Church.

The first Presbyterian Church in Huntersville District was organized in 1836 by Rev. Mitchell Dunlap. On the 12th day of August, 1854, Wm. Cannon, Benj. Herold, and James T. Lockridge, on behalf of the church, contracted with Davis W. Kerr for the erection of the church in Huntersville, at a cost of \$1,846. The building is a white frame building with a gallery across one end and is in good condition today. The auditorium is almost as it was when the church was built. About 1896 a second story was added to the building and was used as a Masonic Hall for Huntersville Lodge No. 65 A. F. & A. M. On the top of the church there is a large Masonic emblem. There is an agreement recorded in the County Clerk's office whereby the Masonic Lodge is to have exclusive use of the second story.

During the Civil War this building was used as a hospital. It was during the Civil War, too, that the Session books and the large pulpit Bible were carried off by soldiers. Some months before the death of the late Andrew Price, he told the story of the Bible in the Huntersville Church. About 1929 news came from Pittsburgh that the Bible had turned up in that city, and was in the possession of James R. Mellon, a brother of Andrew Mellon. The Bible had an inscription in it showing that it was taken from Huntersville at the time of the battle there in 1862. The Bible has never been returned.

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Among the first members of this organization were; Hugh McLaughlin, Sr., James A. Price, and George E. Craig.

Two ministers of prominence in our denomination have gone out from the Huntersville Church: Rev. J. Newton Craig, D.D., Executive Secretary of Home Missions of our Assembly at an early date, and Rev. Wm. T. Price, D.D., prominent minister and historian of Greenbrier Presbytery fifty years ago.

Huntersville church has throughout its history, until the last year, been connected with one or more churches in the Knapps Creek Valley, sharing the ministry of those who ministered to other of those churches.

Early ministers serving the Huntersville Church were:

Rev. J. S. Blair

Rev. David Cunningham

Rev. Joseph Brown

Rev. Henry Brown

Rev. T. P. W. Magruder

Rev. J. C. Barr

Rev. R. P. Kennedy

Rev. G. L. Brown

Rev. H. H. Hamilton

( I was unable to get the dates that these ministers served).

The first session book that can be located began with 1877. Rev. James H. McCown was installed pastor on October 26, 1877 and remained pastor until 1881.

Mr. James M. Lightner, Mr. Samuel W. Beard and Mr. Wm.

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J. McLaughlin were elected elders in 1877. Mr. Andrew M. McLaughlin and Mr. Peter Cleek were elected deacons the same date. Mr. James H. Doyle served as deacon from 1881 to 1886 at which time he was elected an elder and remained one until his death November 17, 1939. Dr. S. Pruyn Patterson was elected an elder in 1886 and served in that capacity until his death in 1907. Mr. Lanty L. Herold was elected a deacon in 1881.

There is no record of the church having a pastor from 1881 until 1886 when the Rev. William T. Price became pastor and served until 1900.

Mr. Amos Barlow was elected an elder in 1900 and remained one until his death in 1908.

Rev. G. W. Nickell was pastor from 1900 until 1907.

Mr. John A. Cleek was elected a deacon in 1901 and Mr. L. W. Herold was elected an elder the same year.

Mr. J. H. Buzzard and Mr. W. H. Barlow were elected deacons in 1903 and the latter has served in that capacity ever since.

Rev. A. S. Rachal was pastor from 1909 until 1914.

Mr. Zane Moore was an elder from 1910 until 1920, when he moved to Marlinton and served as an elder in the Marlinton Presbyterian Church until his death.

The Rev. J. M. Walker was pastor from 1914 until 1920.

Mr. Elihu Moore and Mr. Clarence McComb were elected deacons in 1920 and have served since that date.

Mr. W. B. Sullivan, a student at Union Theological

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Seminary, served this church as pastor during the summer of 1921.

Mr. W. C. Neel, also a student at Union Theological Seminary, served as pastor during the summer of 1922.

Mr. James A. Reed was elected an elder in 1922 and Mr. S. P. Curry in 1924, and both have served ever since.

In 1923 Rev. W. G. Wood became pastor of the church and remained so until 1925.

Rev. Robert Hunter filled the pulpit during the summer of 1925.

Rev. Hiram Reeves, a student at Union Theological Seminary, served as pastor during the summer of 1927.

In 1929 Rev. D. McD. Monroe was installed as pastor and remained so until January 1937.

The church was without a pastor until May 1938, when Rev. A. B. Williford filled the pulpit until May 1939.

In July, 1939, Rev. O. N. Miles began serving as pastor and has served ever since. Rev. Miles, the son of an Episcopalian rector in England, came to America from England in 1905 when he was seventeen years old and joined the English Colony at Mingo. In his youth he was quite an athlete and, I am told, one of the best Rugby football players in this section of the country. He was ordained a minister in the Greenbrier Presbytery and has done Home Mission work ever since. He married Miss Marianna McClung from Greenbrier County and has a grown son and daughter. On account of ill health, Rev. Miles has only three charges at the present

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time, two on Elk and the Huntersville Church. He has lived in Marlinton for many years.

The Huntersville Presbyterian church was used by all denominations until the Methodists built their church in Huntersville sometime in the eighteen-eighties.

To Huntersville is <sup>due</sup> the distinction of being the first place in Pocahontas County where a Sabbath School was held throughout the year.

At the present time no Sabbath School services are held in the Presbyterian church but the Presbyterians join with the Methodists at the Methodist church for Sabbath School.

There are between thirty and forty members in this church today and services are held here twice a month.

The first printed notice of preaching service at Huntersville was in 1824, twelve years before the organization of the first church. This occurs in the diary of the Rev. S. B. Witt, a Baptist minister. Here is an extract from his diary:

Sept. 18, 1824 - Preached today at Huntersville to a considerable congregation. At this place there is a dancing school just commencing and, as soon as the meeting was over, the greater part of the congregation returned to the ball room and commenced dancing. "Oh, that I may be the honored instrument in the hands of the Almighty in bringing them to the knowledge of the truth".

Material for this manuscript from:

Hardesty's Encyclopedia

Old Churches - Charles Carpenter in W. Va. Review

The Church on the Western Warters - Courtney

History of Pocahontas County - Price

Other Information - Mrs. Howard Barlow

Mrs. Elihu Moore

Mrs. Peyton Moore

Mrs. Fred Moore

Additional information from Price's History of Pocahontas Co.

Dr. Witt became a noted minister in Prince Edward County, and gathered a church of seven or eight hundred members on Sandy River. Dr. Wm. T. Price, while a student at the seminary heard Dr. Witt preach the memorial sermon of a wealthy citizen, who committed suicide on his wife's grave a short time after her death. Dr. Price led the singing of the hymns. After the services Dr. Price made Dr. Witt's acquaintance. The venerable man had not forgotten about the dance and mentioned the Foages and the Callisons as persons he well remembered. Dr. Witt was quite independent, even wealthy, and spent his old age in a charming country home in the limits of the grand congregation he had gathered in the pastorate of nearly thirty years duration. S. B. Witt, Jr., a Richmond lawyer, was his son.

For many years religious services were held in the court house at Huntersville. When the academy was built in 1842, it was used as a place of worship by Methodists of all branches, Episcopalians and Presbyterians. The Presbyterian church afterwards became the place where all denominations

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generally worshipped. In the early summer of 1865 the Rev. M. D. Dunlap and W. T. Price were engaged in the first sacramental meeting held after the war. A detachment of federal troops from Buckhannon passed through the town, rode around the church, looked at the broken windows, examined the horses with critical eyes, and religious services were going on all the while without even pausing. Sermon and sacramental service over, Mr. Dunlap who rode in from the country that morning and hitched his horse near the church, went to get the horse and found that it had been taken away as a "branded horse". During Averill's retreat through the Levels this horse was abandoned and worn out. Mr. Dunlap had taken it up and put it in good condition. The venerable preacher had to return to his home at Hillsboro on a borrowed horse.